

## THE PRESENT CONDITION OF INDIA

of labour in its personnel. They consider that the prosperity of the industry has been exaggerated by the Committee, and that its proposals would put an additional burden on the industry which would wipe out all its profits. The result of this, they add, would be to throw out of work some 36,000 workers. They accept the principle of standardisation of wages and would be prepared to consider a minimum wage, if it were universal to all industries and applied all over India. They refuse to recognise and facilitate the efforts of any workers' organisation which is "permeated with Communistic ideas." As regards labour statistics, housing, indebtedness and allied problems, they consider that these can best be tackled by Government and local bodies.

Despite evidence to the contrary, which they question, the employers deny that there have been wage cuts since 1929 or that wages are lower in Cawnpore than in Bombay, on the basis that the cost of living and housing is lower than in Bombay. They regard the demand for holidays with pay and sick-leave allowances as "impracticable." As regards the Union, they are only prepared to recognise it if it is "non-political" and "purged" of communist elements.

Leftists and moderates in the Union desired to hold the workers in leash till the Government had made a reply, but the workers would not be checked and the strike committees got to work. Now, some 42,000 workers are out. This general strike has features which differentiate it from the strike of last year and, indeed, any previous labour disputes. It has been in progress now for more than four weeks and it has been strictly disciplined and nonviolent. The method of *satyagraha* has been used, pickets lying in the road, according to the best Gandhian technique, and, what is still more remarkable, the Congress both in the city and in the whole of U.P. has thrown itself into the support of the workers. Congress volunteers have been enlisted—mostly from the middle class—to help the pickets, and gifts in money and kind are being collected from all over the province. The Provincial Congress Committee passed a strong resolution supporting the strikers. Among other things it said that "the workers of Cawnpore are fighting, not only for themselves, but for the entire working class of India. They are fighting for human rights, and every Congressman must sympathise with them and wish them

success. The P.C.G. therefore calls upon  
all Congress Committees and the